

American Rescue Plan Act Project Grants

Introduction

The Office of Library and Information Services is making American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Project Grants available in amounts from \$10,000 to \$50,000 to eligible libraries, library consortia and library-serving organizations to execute forward-looking projects that support coronavirus response and recovery. Libraries or organizations are encouraged to submit proposals that expand digital access, support learning, and strengthen library services in their communities to aid recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. Libraries or organizations are encouraged to submit proposals that prioritize partnerships (among libraries and/or with non-library organizations), provide resources for job seekers and support workforce development, or expand digital access or learning programs for underserved populations.

The application period is open through October 1, 2021. Projects must be completed in their entirety between contract execution and August 19, 2022; applications with a shorter time frame for project execution are also welcome.

Background

The Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) is the Rhode Island state library agency and is supported by funds from the State of Rhode Island and the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Support from the IMLS includes an annual grant from the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) under the IMLS Grants to States Program and a one-time coronavirus relief grant through the American Rescue Plan Act

Purpose

OLIS' 2022 ARPA Project Grants support response and recovery from the coronavirus pandemic by distributing ARPA subgrants to libraries, consortia and library-serving organizations in Rhode Island. The objective of the ARPA Project Grants is to facilitate a rapid return to expanded library services delivered in traditional and new ways through systems designed to provide safe access and services for all Rhode Islanders.

Priorities

American Rescue Plan Act funds are distributed through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under the [purposes and priorities](#) of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and are provided to help communities respond directly and immediately to the pandemic, as well as to related economic and community needs through equitable approaches. OLIS' [plan for the use of ARPA funds](#) includes the following goals to be executed by OLIS, its partners, and through subgrants:

- 1) Digital access: expand availability of and access to up-to-date computers, technology and the internet, especially in underserved communities; increase availability of and access to digital content statewide, including for individuals with visual impairments.

- 2) Learning: provide resources to support remote learners and increase opportunities for individuals to acquire digital, workforce and career skills; strengthen reading and learning programs for children and teens to address pandemic-related learning loss.
- 3) Strengthening library services: explore new methods of program delivery; provide safer and more efficient methods to deliver in-person library service; address issues magnified during the pandemic such as an unsustainable model for the delivery of eBooks, access to services for non-English speakers and marginalized communities, and the limited ability to provide remote/virtual services to those unable to visit the library.

To advance the achievement of these goals, Rhode Island libraries, library consortia and related organizations may submit applications for ARPA Project Grants in the amount of \$10,000 to \$50,000. Proposals should address one or more of the following priorities from [OLIS' Five Year Plan for Library Services and Technology Act Funding](#):

- a) Improve or increase access to library services, materials, or programs, through partnerships with other libraries or non-profit partners or through assessment of current services and identification of service gaps;
- b) Leverage new technologies or use existing technologies in new ways to promote community learning and engagement across the age spectrum and for diverse populations in a transformative manner;
- c) Expand literacy, learning, or reading programs;
- d) Expand opportunities for adult learners, especially those seeking to develop workforce skills, to establish a small business, or to improve digital literacy skills;
- e) Expand access to library materials or services to underserved populations and/or people with disabilities;
- f) Provide opportunities for increased civic engagement to foster connections and build understanding within the community; or
- g) Support community needs in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Projects should address one or more of these priorities in the context of response to the coronavirus pandemic while creating demonstrable and sustainable change in the delivery of library services in Rhode Island. In keeping with the purposes of LSTA and ARPA, capital expenditures are not eligible expenses under the ARPA Grant Program.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Project Grants

Application Instructions and Process

Applicants for ARPA Project Grants must complete and submit all sections of the ARPA Grant Application. Parts 2-6 should be completed as a clear and succinct narrative and must not exceed 4 pages in total. The application must be completed electronically in Word (Application) and Excel (Budget) and submitted electronically in those formats; no attachments or additional documents will be accepted or considered as part of the grant application. Scanned copies will not be accepted.

Projects must be completed by August 19, 2022. Final reports are due by September 30, 2022.

Section A: Application

Submission must include:

- 1) Applicant Information Form (includes Partner Form, if applicable)
- 2) Project Overview
- 3) Project Purpose
- 4) Project Design
- 5) Evaluation Plan
- 6) Project Budget

1: Applicant Information

Provide all information requested in the Application Information Form. Every applicant must have a [DUNS number or Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\)](#) for federal reporting purposes. Where applicable, the Project Partner Form (Part 1A) should be filled out and submitted. A separate Project Partner Form must be submitted for each partner and labeled in sequence (1A, 1B, etc.); additional Project Partner Forms may be found on the OLIS website. Note that partners have a shared or mutual interest in the goals and objectives of the project; vendors or service providers are not partners.

2: Project Overview

- a. Select the OLIS priority addressed (see Priorities (a) through (g) on page 2). If more than one priority is addressed, please select the one that best represents your project.
- b. Provide a brief, high level synopsis of the project. (Maximum length: 100 words)

3: Project Purpose

Identify the need or challenge that the project will address and who will benefit from the project. Be sure to include the following:

- The project's target audience and the need or challenge it faces (Needs Statement)
- Evidence that addressing the need or challenge fulfills the library or consortium's mission, including how the project fits into the library's strategic plan

- How the project complements or enhances existing services provided by your library or consortium (and your partners, if applicable)
- What the overall project goal is and how it will benefit the target audience
- How the project aligns with the selected priority in Part 2 and supports coronavirus response and recovery

Note that the “target audience” is the audience for which the project is intended. The target audience could be children, teens, adults, seniors, intergenerational, families, the general population or other specific groups such as ethnic or racial minority population(s), immigrants/refugees, individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited literacy or informational skills, non-English speakers, jobseekers, or library staff. Other groups may benefit from your project but identify which group or groups the project was specifically designed for.

4: Project Design

Describe the project’s design.

- Clearly state project goals and objectives
- Outline the plan of operation, including what activities, tasks and methods will be used to accomplish the project purpose
- List the specific resources required to execute the project, including staff and their roles, materials, equipment, services, etc.
- Describe how the project will be promoted to the target audience, community, and other stakeholders
- Provide a timeline of activities and project milestones
- Describe the roles and commitments of partnering organizations, if applicable
- Provide information about any previous work done in this area, if applicable

5: Evaluation Plan

Describe how the project’s success will be measured.

- Identify the aspects of the project that will be evaluated and how that will be done
- List and describe the anticipated project outputs and project outcomes (outputs consist of measurable objectives, outcomes demonstrate the changes and/or enhancements that result from the project)
- Clearly state how it will be determined if the project met the need or challenge outlined in the Needs Statement and how it affected the target audience

6: Project Budget

Refer to the definitions in Appendix I to correctly allocate costs to supplies and materials, equipment and software, services, consultants, and other in the budget form. Enter amounts requested in Grant Request column, and, if applicable, include additional costs, including any funding from outside sources (excluding federal funds), in the Cash Match column. Amounts for Services (Table 1), Consultants (Table 2), and Other Costs (Table 3) will be calculated in their

respective tables and carried to the Project Costs master table. The total Grant Request and Cash Match must match the amounts in the Applicant Information Form.

Once the budget form has been completed, provide a brief narrative of the budget in Part 6 of the application. The narrative should specifically describe what each category of costs includes, such as supplies to be purchased in each of the three categories, what services will be purchased, what other costs entail, and what services will be provided by consultants.

The project and all project expenditures must be completed by August 19, 2022. Expenditures made prior to execution of the grant agreement or after August 19, 2022 are not eligible expenses.

OLIS will review financial reports of the project and may audit the project. All project expenditures should be documented and supported with invoices and evidence of payment and must be available to OLIS on request.

Budget items must comply with federal regulations for allowable costs 2 CFR Part 200. Please contact OLIS if you have questions about allowable costs.

Section B: Process

1: Required Documents

All parts of the application and the budget form must be completed in their entirety electronically and submitted electronically in their original format. When saving your file, please save it with your 3-letter library code followed by a dash and "ARPA-2202." Libraries or organizations without a code should contact OLIS. For example, DSL-ARPA-2202.

Applicants who are awarded ARPA Grants must complete the ARPA Grant Agreement and LSTA Federal Requirements, Assurances and Certifications upon award. If the library or organization is not already listed as a vendor with the State of Rhode Island, it will need to complete the State of Rhode Island Payer's Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification (Form W-9).

A Request for Payment Form must be completed to draw down grant funds. Grant funds may be requested to reimburse expenditures for the grant project or for expenditures that will be made within 30 days of OLIS receiving the Request for Payment Form.

3: Project Reports

A final project report and financial report is required for all projects.

4: LORI Grant Program Contact Information

OLIS Staff are available to assist you throughout the grant process. Funded projects will be assigned to an OLIS staff member to answer questions or assist you throughout the project.

If you have questions about the ARPA Grant Program Application Process:

Nicolette Baffoni, Library Development Manager
nicolette.baffoni@olis.ri.gov

All application materials must be submitted electronically in their original format to:

grants@olis.ri.gov

LORI Grant Schedule

- Grant application period: August 25 – October 1, 2021
- Notification of award: On or before October 15, 2022
- Grant activities commence: Upon contract execution – on or after October 18, 2022
- Final date to request drawdown of grant funds: July 29, 2022
- Grant conclusion: August 19, 2022
- Deadline for final grant report: September 16, 2022

Appendix I: Definitions of Terms

The following are definitions for terms used in the LORI Grant Program application. For additional help, see the [Grants.gov online glossary](#)

Activities: Actions through which the objectives and goals of a grant are accomplished and deliverables are created.

Allowable Costs: Determination of costs allowable under a federal award or subgrant is made in accordance with the government-wide cost principles in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in [2 CFR Part 200](#). Refer to the [IMLS Tip Sheet for Allowable Costs](#), or contact OLIS if you have questions about allowable costs.

Anecdotal reports: Can be obtained through interviews with or open-ended surveys completed by project participants. An anecdote is a brief description of a participant's response, not necessarily based on objective information.

Cash Match: Includes direct costs committed by the applicant or partner organization and sponsoring organizations, to the extent that such costs are committed as part of the grant funded project. It does not include overhead costs or in-kind contributions and is generally a local investment of funds into a project. A cash match includes a recipient's cash outlay, including the outlay of money contributed to the recipient by third parties. Funds used for a cash match cannot be included as contributions for any other award or grant; are not from another federal award (unless authorized); and are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives.

When cash match is used for personnel costs/the services of an employee, these services must be valued at the employee's regular rate of pay plus an amount of fringe benefits that is reasonable, necessary, allocable, and otherwise allowable and provided these services employ the same skill(s) for which the employee is normally paid. (See also 2 CFR 200.36)

Consultant Fees: Includes all projected expenses related to acquiring the services of a consultant for a specific activity within the project. Costs may include fees, travel expenses and accommodation, and support services obtained directly from the consultant. Describe the expertise of the consultant along with their expected actions/contributions to the project. If a consultant will be paid with grant funds, the applicant should have a written agreement with the consultant defining scope of work and payment.

Data sources: Tools, documents and locations for information that will demonstrate what happened to your target audience; sources of information about conditions being measured. (For example, pre-post test scores, surveys, focus groups, attendance records, program records, assessment reports, records from other organizations, observations, etc.)

Devices: Electronic items such as computers, tablets, hotspots, electronic pens, printers, scanners, etc. A single item that costs \$5,000 or more is considered equipment; see definition below.

DUNS Number: Dun & Bradstreet's Data Universal Numbering System, commonly known as the DUNS Number, is a unique global business identification system that identifies and validates

businesses and other entities. It is a nine-digit non-indicative number and is assigned at the lowest organizational level, i.e. business locations with a unique, separate, and distinct operation. The DUNS Number is assigned to all types of business organizations including sole proprietorships, corporations, partnerships, non-profits, and government entities. It is a system for maintaining accurate, comprehensive and timely information, and is issued rapidly and free of charge for all entities.

LORI Grants are federal subgrants; any entity receiving federal funding is required to have a DUNS number for federal reporting. Libraries can determine if they have a DUNS number by using a [DUNS lookup tool](#); those libraries that do not have a DUNS number or choose not to use their municipality's or institution's number may register for a [free DUNS Number](#).

*Note: By **April of 2022**, the federal government will stop using the DUNS number to uniquely identify entities registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). At that point, entities doing business with the federal government will use a [Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\)](#) created in SAM.gov. Libraries may use their existing DUNS number for ARPA Project Grants or a UEI, if they have one.*

Evaluation plan: A clear representation of the links between the program's or project's activities, the results these activities produce, and how the results will be measured.

Equipment: Electronic or other items with a useful life of more than one year. Purchase of a single piece of equipment over \$5,000.00 requires prior approval by OLIS.

Goals: Goals are broad but clear statements that articulate the desired result of our efforts. Goals should be specific, measurable, attainable (achievable), relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Activities are specific and concrete actions that constitute the plan to achieve the goal.

Needs Statement: Describes a specific need or needs and serves as the basis for a project or plan. Needs should be identified through an assessment of the community, library, or other stakeholders and supported by additional evidence, such as community data and statistics, subject research (formal or informal), the library's prior experiences, or a project partner's experiences. The Needs Statement should align with LORI Grant Program priorities.

Other Operational Expenses: Include allowable costs. Contact OLIS with questions.

Outcomes: Knowledge transferred, or behaviors changed, that is, the good that is done as evidenced by the target audience's changed or improved skills, attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, status, or life conditions brought about by experiencing a program. Outcomes may be immediate, intermediate, or long-term. Outcomes rarely include institutional benefits.

Outputs: the amount of something produced, that is, how much is done. Outputs are measurable or countable.

What are the differences between outputs and outcomes? Outputs are measures of the volume of a program's activity: products created or delivered, number of people served, activities and services carried out. Think of outputs as the "things" piece of evaluation. Outputs are almost always numbers: the number of loans, the number of ILLs, the number of attendees, the number of publications, or the number of times a

workshop was presented. Outcomes are the "people" or the "so what" piece - what happened because of the outputs.

Some examples of Outputs:

- 20 individuals completed training
- 4 workshops were held

Some examples of Outcomes:

- Through Connected Learning, youth can confidently use maker space tools to create tangible content based on their own designs.
- Library staff have the skills to creatively engage patrons in library programming.

Anecdotal reports may be used to support Outcomes.

Personnel Costs: When used for "Cash Match," include all projected salaries, wages and fringe benefits paid to staff who are directly contributing to this project. Include position titles and number of FTEs, but not personal names.

When included in the Grant Request category in the budget, do not include funds used to pay current library staff, except in the case of part-time staff who will be working additional hours and solely on the grant project. The personnel costs category is valid only for staff being paid through the library's regular payroll process. Any other project staff should be listed as a consultant.

Program: Activities and services leading toward independent outcomes. Programs generally have a definite beginning and end. However, they are designed to change attitudes, behaviors, knowledge; or to increase skills and abilities based on assumed need.

Project purpose: Relates to the organization's mission statement (or long-range plan) and defines the audience, outcomes, and services. The project purpose is driven by the needs statement.

Services: Includes subscriptions, training or registration fees. Also includes cost of services provided by a contractor or a vendor. A contracted service differs from a consultant: a consultant is paid for expertise; a service is a one time or ongoing provision of goods or services.

Supplies/Materials: Includes all projected costs for supplies or materials (including books, etc.) or devices that will be purchased specifically for project use. Include software only if a single expenditure results in a perpetual license for the product; otherwise software is a service.

Travel: Includes all transportation, accommodations, meals, etc. Expenses must be directly related to the project activities and must be incurred by staff working on the project. Project the number of travelers expected. It cannot include project staff or consultant commuting from home to the grantee's main facility. Mileage should be calculated at the federal rate in place at the time of travel.

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI): See DUNS Number.